



ELECTION NEWS

A special informational bulletin on the implementation of Michigan's new "consolidated elections" legislation

Michigan Department of State - Terri Lynn Land, Secretary of State

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Greetings! With the November 2, 2004 general election behind us, future issues of *Election News* will focus on the implementation of Michigan's new "consolidated elections" legislation. The many changes in Michigan's elections system which were made under the legislation go into effect on January 1, 2005.

As we work together to ensure the successful implementation of the "consolidated elections" legislation, the Department of State stands ready to help you with any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact the Bureau of Elections anytime we can be of assistance! Phone: (517) 373-2540. Toll free: (800) 292-5973.

In This Issue ...

This issue of *Election News* features information on the following topics:

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Revised Overview of "Consolidated Elections" Legislation Available Online

"Consolidated elections" is an expression used to describe a nine-bill package signed into law in early 2004. The nine-bill package was followed by fifteen "trailer bills" which were signed into law in July 2004. A general overview of the legislation which has been revised to incorporate the changes provided under the "trailer bills" is available on the Department's website www.michigan.gov/sos. The document is offered as a reference guide to the changes effected under the "consolidated elections" package. *A careful reading of the overview is an important first step in understanding the impact "consolidation elections" will have on Michigan's elections system as well as the actions which must be taken to implement the new program!*

Deadline for Exercising Election Date “Options” Elapses on December 31, 2004

The “consolidated elections” legislation extends certain cities, all villages and most school districts a number of different election date “options” which can be adopted at the discretion of the jurisdiction’s governing body. A city council, village council or school board that wishes to adopt an election date option extended under the legislation must pass a resolution indicating the jurisdiction’s election date choice no later than December 31, 2004.

At least one public hearing must be conducted by a city council, village council or school board prior to adopting an available election date option. A “record roll call vote” on the resolution must be conducted. The vote on the resolution may take place at the end of the final public hearing. If a resolution is adopted, a copy of the resolution must be filed with the Secretary of State. (Submission address: Michigan Department of State, Bureau of Elections, P.O. Box 20126, Lansing, Michigan 48901-0726.) Sample resolution forms are available on the Department’s website <www.michigan.gov/sos>.

The various election date options extended to cities, villages and school districts are detailed in the “elections consolidation” overview posted on the Department of State’s website.

Planning for January School Election “Coordinating Committee” Meetings

County clerks, city clerks and township clerks who are required to function as the “school election coordinator” for any local school districts, intermediate school districts or community college districts are encouraged to start planning now for the conduct of the district’s election “coordinating committee” meeting which must be conducted in January 2005. Actions which can be taken to initiate the planning process include the following:

- Conduct an informal “pre-meeting” of the coordinating committee members to discuss the decisions which must be finalized when the committee meets in January. (See next article for further information on the decisions which must be finalized at the January school election “coordinating committee” meetings.) The county clerk, city clerk or township clerk who will serve as the district’s “election coordinator” is responsible for chairing any and all meetings held to discuss the conduct of the district’s elections.
- Obtain a detailed map of the school district which clearly shows the boundaries of the district. (See “Obtaining School District Maps” below for information on the resources available through the website maintained by the Department of Information Technology’s Center for Geographic Information.)
- Assemble a list of election related duties and responsibilities which must be performed to administer the school district’s elections. In an instance where the county clerk is responsible for serving as the district’s “election coordinator,” identify those election related duties and responsibilities that will be performed on the county level and those duties and responsibilities that could be more efficiently performed on the local level.
- If the school district can choose to have its elections conducted on the odd-year May election date; annually on the May election date; or annually on the November election date, contact

the school district to determine the election schedule the school district has selected or is considering.

- In an instance where the county clerk is responsible for serving as the district's "election coordinator," review the geography of the district to determine where precinct lines should be drawn for the conduct of the school district's elections. (The precinct size limits provided under Michigan election law must be observed.) Also determine appropriate locations for the polling places needed to conduct the school district's elections.

Decisions Which Must Be Finalized at January School Election "Coordinating Committee" Meetings Chaired by County Clerks

No later than January 31, 2005, the "election coordinator" of each local school district, intermediate school district and community college district must schedule and chair a meeting of the district's election "coordinating committee." Within 14 days after the meeting is convened, the committee must file a report with the Secretary of State which sets forth the arrangements made for the conduct of the district's elections. In an instance where a county clerk is responsible for serving as the district's "election coordinator," there will be a wide range of decisions which must be finalized at the January meeting as detailed below:

- **Are there any city or township clerks that wish to "opt in" and conduct the district's elections in his or her city or township?** (In an instance where a local school district, intermediate school district or community college district falls in more than a single city or township, the clerk of any city or township that falls in the district can opt to conduct the district's elections in his or her city or township. Before entering into such an agreement, the city or township clerk must consult with the other members of the city council or township board. Such agreements are binding for two years.)
- **How does the county clerk wish to handle 1) the distribution, receipt and processing of absent voter ballot applications 2) arrangements for the voting equipment needed to conduct the district's elections and 3) the production of QVF lists for the district's elections?** (A county clerk required to serve as an "election coordinator" of a local school district, intermediate school district or community college district may direct any city or township clerk in the district to distribute, receive and process absent voter ballot applications for the district's elections; provide voting equipment for the conduct of district's elections; or provide "the list of election inspectors for that city or township.")
- **Who is in the best position to handle the following election related duties for the school district: 1) acceptance of candidate filings 2) issuance of absentee ballots and acceptance of returned absentee ballots 3) appointment of election inspectors 4) voting equipment programming and testing 5) ballot proofing 6) publication of required registration and election notices 7) handling QVF related responsibilities (setting up election, production of precinct lists, updating voter history, etc.) 8) setting up the precincts on election day 9) handling election day issues and "troubleshooting" and 10) storing the voted ballots after the election.** (A county clerk required to serve as the "election coordinator" of a local school district, intermediate school district or community college district may delegate all or a portion of his or her school election responsibilities to a city or township clerk with the

agreement of the city or township clerk. The law does not permit school “election coordinators” the authority to delegate duties associated with the administration of school elections to school board secretaries or school district personnel.)

- **What precinct boundaries need to be established for the conduct of the district’s elections? Where should polling places be located for the district’s elections?** (As Michigan election law now governs the administration of school elections, precincts established for the conduct of local school district elections, intermediate school district elections and community college district elections cannot contain more than 2,999 registered voters. Precincts established for the conduct of school district election can cross city and township boundaries if desirable.)

Obtaining School District Maps

The Department of Information Technology’s Center for Geographic Information (CGI) currently has two school district map series available online and third school district map series scheduled for release in January 2005. The two school district maps series which are available at the present time can be accessed through the URL’s listed below:

- School District (K-12) maps by county:

http://www.michigan.gov/cgi/0,1607,7-158-12540_13084-100538--,00.html

- ISD maps showing all constituent K-12 school districts:

http://www.michigan.gov/cgi/0,1607,7-158-12540_13084-29765--,00.html

If you have Adobe Acrobat Reader you will be able to view and print sections of the maps with standard printers. Better results can be obtained through the use of large format plotters and color printers.

In January 2005, CGI plans to release an individual map of each school district that participated in a recent boundary review. When available, the maps can be accessed through the following URL: http://www.michigan.gov/cgi/0,1607,7-158-12540_13084---,00.html

If you wish to have CGI print any of the available county maps for you, you can fill out an online form. The fees involved are printed on the form. The form can be accessed through the following URL: http://www.michigan.gov/cgi/0,1607,7-158-12540_13937-101045--,00.html A similar form will be made available in January for those who wish to obtain an individual school district map through CGI.